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# ROCKETING TO STARDOM

**It's easy to be smitten by Jennifer Connelly. Dressed in a provocative pants suit, she the sort of person who demands your attention without having to say a word. Not only that, she's intuitive, perceptive and intelligent; an interviewer's dream, you might say. Paul Fischer reports.**

Jennifer Connelly has grown up considerably since her film debut at age 12 in Sergio Leone's *Once Upon A Time In America*. Since that film, she has starred in a number of diverse films, each of which offers proof of her unquestionable range and talent. Her latest film, being released later this month, is Disney's fantasy-adventure *The Adventures Of The Rocketeer*. On a recent visit to Australia, I was one of the lucky ones to spend some time with the talented actress.

Connelly was taking a break from her work schedule to help tell the world about *The Adventures Of The Rocketeer*, along with co-

star and fiancé Bill Campbell. She admits that, even as a 12 years old, when she was appearing in her first film with the likes of Robert De Niro in *Once Upon A Time In America*, she knew that she was destined to become an actress. Since that film, she enjoyed a continuous stream of work, appearing in nine movies over the past eight years. These movies have included the cult horror film, *Phenomena*, *Seven Minutes to Heaven*, and the lead role in Jim Henson's fantasy *Labyrinth*.

For the actress, making the various transitions from child to adolescent to adult performer came easy. "It's not so hard for me because I've never been famous. That was great in my case because I could grow up being 12. If I had have been really famous as a little kid, I'd never would have been perceived as an adult."

Prior to shooting *The Adventures Of The Rocketeer*, Jennifer worked on a very different film, as the beautifully sensuous loans officer in *The Hot Spot*, in which she starred opposite Don Johnson and Virginia Madsen. This erotic thriller was directed by Dennis Hopper whom the actress describes as being "fun to work with. He's very understanding and aware of his actors and he sets up a kind of protective space for them to work in. He's also very funny and bizarre in a way."

Despite the success of her films, Connelly still doesn't get handed a role, but is required to journey through the arduous audition process of reading and screen tests. So it was with *Rocketeer*. "It was your pretty standard audition process. I read the script and liked it, so I went in and met with director Joe Johnston and read for him. Then they called me back and I did a screen test with Bill [Campbell] who was already cast as the Rocketeer. I remember that, unlike a lot of

screen tests, this was a big to-do, with full wardrobe, old cars, make-up and hair, etc."

*The Adventures Of The Rocketeer*, which is based on a comic-strip, is a fun-filled fantasy/adventure set during the 1930s, and revolves around a newly invented rocket pack which, when strapped on one's back, allows that person to fly. Everyone is after the rocket, from a Nazi posing as a swashbuckling actor, to a group of mobsters, to the FBI. Connelly plays Jenny, an aspiring actress who becomes unwittingly involved in the adventure saga. Despite the film being essentially a fantasy, that didn't stop Connelly from reading up about the period in preparation for the film.

"I researched the physical look of things, as well the chronology of things to make sure that I knew where I was, time-wise and history-wise." She describes her character as "the classic damsel-in-distress. What I like about her is her resourcefulness. The interesting aspect of the movie, is that neither Bill's or my character are superheroes. Bill, in particular, uses what he's got, which is this thing which can be indistinguishable from a vacuum cleaner to someone else. For my character, Jenny, she's an actress who gets herself into trouble and acts her way out of it."

While the film didn't do as well in the US as it should have done, audience reaction has been exceptional, with "a lot of cheering and yelling at all the right moments." It's obvious that both Jennifer and the rest of the cast, had a great time making this film, which translates well on the screen. Following her promotional tour of the movie, Jennifer headed back to the real world. "I'm going back to college to face up to my final exams." But don't worry; this talented performer assured me that she hasn't given up on a continuing career in the movies.







# A Time For Reality



New Zealand band Real Time is one of if not **the** top Christian music band in Australasia today. Formed in 1986 by a group of Christian musicians eager to create a top band, Real Time has gone through several line-up changes in the creation of the group which visited Australia recently to promote Real Time's latest album, *Cold World*.

"Now that the band has been going a reasonable length of time, everyone has their say these days," says Karel Van Helden Stevens, an original member of Real Time, who provides lead vocals, plays guitar and harmonica and has contributed towards writing the group's many self-penned songs.

"All of us have different strengths whether it is relationships or personalities or a particular skill," he says of the way the team of seven musicians manage to remain working in harmony with each other, given their many, various talents. "Chris Baxter, for instance, plays the sax and, as he is a professional designer, he sets up our stage.

Mark is a manager in his professional career so he takes on that role."

Mark de Jong, the bass player and manager who first brought the various band members together, explains that Real Time's tour with Christian comedian Mike Warnke was their big break. "We would go on and support the whole thing at the beginning. Our thought was that we were just the support band. He turned it around and made us feel like we were really part of this thing. The chance to play to sell-out crowds through New Zealand was a real bonus for the band."

Mark and Karel were thrilled when their first album - *Cold World* - reached number two on the New Zealand charts. "Our main aim was to cover the cost of production. We really didn't know what to expect but hoped that by us using good people and having a good sound, we would have an effect." For them, the album's success has given them the opportunity to do what they always wanted their music to do - "To present through our music,

something of Jesus without it necessarily being the traditional evangelistic sense of constant preaching. We want to be able to present it to people of our generation in a way that doesn't turn them off. Our goal is to write and perform good music, to develop close relationships between the band and listeners to our music, so we can, in our imperfect way, be a model of what Christian life is." "Men talk about the outer and how we would like other people to perceive us," says Karel on how he would like Real Time to be viewed by listeners of Christian music, "But we want our relationships with each other and with God; what is on the inside, those things which last, to be what people see when they see and hear us sing. Our main goal is to present Jesus and we love music so this is a very relevant way for us to present our Christianity."

Real Time's Album, *Cold World*, is released on D and cassette by Word Australia.